GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:213
ANSWERED ON:18.07.2016
Protection of Endangered Languages
Kothapalli Smt. Geetha

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

a) whether the Government has noticed that a large number of languages have gone extinct in the country since the time of independence, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefore;
b) whether United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has found there are 197 endangered languages in the country with 42 classified as critically endangered which are included in the list Nihali, traced to the pre-Aryan and pre-munda period, if so, the details thereof; and
c) the steps taken by the Government to protect all languages in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI. PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)
(a) Yes, Madam. The Government is aware that a few languages have become extinct since independence. These languages became extinct because either the speakers of these languages died or there are no first language speakers left.
(b) The information of 197 endangered languages and 42 critically endangered languages of that list, as classified by UNESCO, is at annexure.
(c) The Government of India has initiated a Scheme known as "Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India" (SPPEL). Under this Scheme, the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore works on protection, preservation and documentation of all the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 people. The Government has also initiated a Project known as Bharatavani implemented by the CIIL for all languages, especially the languages spoken by more than ten thousand persons, in the cyberspace. This Project aims to build a searchable knowledge repository in and about all the languages in India in multimedia (text, audio, video, images) formats through an online portal.
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